

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Tannochbrae agus Àiteachan “Albannach” eile (1)

A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 677. Note that there is also a simplified version called An Litir Bheag which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 373 corresponds to Litir 677.

Dè th’ anns a’ chumantas eadar Tannochbrae, Balamory agus Glendarroch? Uill, airson sin a fhreagairt, feumaidh sibh a bhith eòlach air prògraman telebhisein ann an Alba, cuid dhiubh rudeigin sean a-nise. Chan e dìreach prògraman a chaidh fhaicinn ann an Alba, ach a chaidh a dhèanamh agus a bha stèidhichte ann an Alba.

Tha na h-ainmean uile Albannach don cridhe, ach chan e àite fìor a th’ ann an gin dhiubh. Chan fhaigh thu lorg air Tannochbrae, Balamory no Glendarroch, ged a rachadh tu timcheall Alba le mapaichean nad mhàileid. Uill, ’s dòcha nach eil sin buileach fìor. Ma tha sibh ag èisteachd ann an Rubha Àird Driseig ann an Earra-Ghàidheal, tha teans ann gum bi sibh ag èigheachd air an rèidio, “Haidh, Ruairidh, tha Glendarroch an seo aig iomall a’ bhaile againn!” Agus tha sin fìor.

Ach chan eil fhios agam an robh an fheadhainn a chruthaich Glendarroch airson an telebhisein mothachail don àite faisg air Rubha Àird Driseig. **Dh’fhaodamaid a ràdh** gun deach na h-ainmean sin uile a chruthachadh às a’ mhacmeanmna. Agus tha e inntinneach gu bheil, anns gach ainm, co-dhiù aon eileamaid Ghàidhlig, mura h-eil na dhà ann.

’S e Tannochbrae am baile anns an robh an sreath phrògraman *Dr Finlay’s Casebook* stèidhichte. Chaidh an t-ainm (agus an t-àite) a chruthachadh leis an ùghdar A J Cronin, a thogadh ann an Siorrachd Dhùn Breatann. Nuair a chruthaich e an t-ainm, chaidh e gu eileamaid Ghàidhlig – *tamhnach* – a’ ciallachadh “achadh torrach, gorm, gu h-àraidh am measg talamh garbh”. Ris a sin, chuir e eileamaid Albais – *brae* – a’ ciallachadh “leathad”.

Ach dè mu dheidhinn *tamhnach*? Chan eil sin ri chluinntinn ann an cainnt an t-sluaigh an-diugh, a bheil? Uill, chan eil ann an Alba. Ach tha ann an Èirinn. A rèir Faclair Ó Dónaill, tha *tamhnach* ann an Gaeilge a’ ciallachadh “grassy upland, arable place in mountain”. Agus tha e cumanta gu leòr ann an ainmean-àite, an dà chuid ann an Èirinn agus Alba.

Mar eisimpleir, ann am fìor cheann a tuath na Gàidhealtachd, tha àite faisg air Inbhir Ùige ann an Gallaibh air a bheil Tannach. Tha sin a’ tighinn bho *tamhnach*. Tha fhios gur e *An Tamhnach* a chanadh na Gàidheil ris.

Agus mus can duine agaibh – chan urrainn gur e ainm Gàidhlig a th’ ann ma tha e ann an sealladh Inbhir Ùige, tha Tannach air a chuariteachadh le àiteachan mar Kinloch, Dhuloch agus Achairn, a bharrachd air àiteachan le ainmean Lochlannach. Tha am facal a’ toirt deagh fhios dhuinn gun robh na daoine a thug an t-ainm don àite a’ fuireach ann, agus ag àiteachadh na talmhainn. ’S e tuathanaich a bh’ annta.

Gu deas air Gallaibh, tha Tannachy ann am Bràigh Chat, ann an Srath Bhrùra. Tha Tannachy agus Porttannachy ann am Moireibh, faisg air Bucaidh, agus tha grunn ainmean le *tamhnach* annta ann an diofar sgìrean eile, leithid Tannochside ann an Siorrachd Lannraig.

Ach, 's ann anns an iar-dheas as pailte a tha iad. Eadar Siorrachd Àir agus Siorrachd Dhùn Phris, tha gu leòr dhiubh ann – ainmean mar Tannoch Burn, Tannoch Flow, Tannockhill, Tannahill, Tannielaggie agus Tannacrieff. Uill, tha an ùine air ruith orm – tillidh mi don chuspair an ath thuras.

* * * * *

Faclan na Litreach: Rubha Àird Driseig: *Ardrishaig*; eileamaid: *element*; Siorrachd Dhùn Breatann: *Dunbartonshire*; leathad: *slope*; Inbhir Ùige: *Wick*; Siorrachd Lannraig: *Lanarkshire*; Siorrachd Àir: *Ayrshire*; Siorrachd Dhùn Phris: *Dumfriesshire*.

Abairtean na Litreach: cuid dhiubh rudeigin sean a-nise: *some of them pretty old now*; a chaidh fhaicinn ann an Alba: *that were seen in Scotland*; Albannach don cridhe: *Scottish to their core*; chan e àite fìor a th' ann an gin dhiubh: *none of them are real places*; ged a rachadh tu timcheall Alba le mapaichean nad mhàileid: *though you should travel Scotland with maps in your bag*; nach eil sin buileach fìor: *that that's not entirely true*; mothachail don àite: *aware of the place*; gun deach na h-ainmean sin uile a chruthachadh às a' mhacmeanmna: *that all those names were created from the imagination*; mura h-eil na dhà ann: *if there aren't [actually] two*; achadh torrach, gorm: *a green fertile field*; ri chluinntinn ann an cainnt an t-sluaigh: *to be heard in the people's speech*; chan urrainn gur e ainm Gàidhlig a th' ann: *it can't be a Gaelic name*; air a chuirteachadh: *surrounded*; a' toirt deagh fhios dhuinn: *gives us good knowledge*; ann am Bràigh Chat, ann an Srath Bhrùra: *in the upland of East Sutherland, in Strath Brora*; Moireibh, faisg air Bucaidh: *Moray, near Buckie*; 's ann anns an iar-dheas as pailte a tha iad: *it's in the south-west that they're most plentiful*; tha gu leòr dhiubh ann: *there are plenty of them*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: Tamhnach, *often anglicised tannoch*, is a fascinating place-name element. It has not made the transition into Scots, unlike many other Gaelic environmental terms; neither is it part of the modern Scottish Gaelic lexicon. But it has been retained in Irish Gaelic; tamhnach means "grassy upland, arable place in mountain" (Ó Dónaill). It occurs in place-names in both countries, notably in the north of Ireland and south-west Scotland. Irish examples include Tamnaharry (Tamhnach an Choirthe "clearing or grassy upland of the stone") and Tamnaghvelton (Tamhnach Bhealtaine "field of the Beltane festivities"). It has been suggested that, like cill, its distribution reflects early settlement of Gaelic-speakers in Scotland. If that is correct, its occurrence in Lothian is notable, as is its presence close to Wick (unless it is a developed form of a Norse original), where it is generally presumed that Gaelic did not have a toponymic impact until the late 13th Century at earliest. If you have any knowledge or thoughts on tamhnach, I'd be pleased to hear from you on rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk.

Gnàthas-cainnt na Litreach: Dh'fhaodamaid a ràdh: *we might say*.

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoineachadh le MG ALBA